

THE

COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

VOL. IV.

BOSTON, JUNE 1, 1842.

No. 11.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

[Continued from page 160.]

"Sept. 17. I TESTED Laura's conscientiousness by relating a simple story. A little boy went to see a lady, and the lady gave him two birds, one for himself, and one for his sister; she put them in a basket for him to carry home, and told him not to open the basket until he got home; the boy went into the street, and met another little boy, who said, 'Open the basket, and let me feel of the birds;' and the boy said, 'No, no;' but the other boy said, 'Yes, yes;' and then the boy opened the basket, and they felt of the birds. Did he do right? She paused, and said, 'Yes.' I said, Why? She replied, '*He did not remember.*' I said, If he did remember, did he do right? She replied, '*Little wrong to forget.*' I then went on to say, When the boys did feel of the birds, one bird was killed. Here she became very much excited, and manifested the greatest anxiety and distress, saying, '*Why did boy feel hard? why did bird not fly?*' I went on: He carried the basket and birds home, and gave the dead bird to his sister; did he do right, or wrong? She said, '*Wrong.*' Why? '*To kill bird.*' I said, But who must have the live bird, the boy or the girl? She said, '*Girl.*' Why? '*Because boy was careless, and girl was not careless.*' She was at first a little confused about the persons, but decided promptly the question of right or wrong, both in respect to opening the basket, and about who ought to possess the bird."

She supposed it was all reality; and I could not well make her conceive the object of the fable, much less give her an idea of the ingenious author of it.

Her mind was for some time entirely occupied with this story, and she afterwards asked, "*Did man knock (strike) boy because he killed bird?*" I said, No; the boy's heart did knock him; does your heart knock you when you do wrong? She inquired about the beating of the heart, and said, "*My heart did knock little when I did do wrong.*" She asked, "*Why blood came in face?*" I said, When wrong is done. She paused, and said, "*Blood did come in Olive's face when she did tell lie; do blood come in your face when you do wrong?*"

I reflected much upon whether I ought yet to give her any general rules of right, benevolence, duty, &c., or trust to example, action, and habit, and decided upon the last; example and practice must precede, and generalization will easily follow.

It is most pleasing to observe that beautiful spirit of charity which

prompts her to extenuate the faults of others, and which, when any story of the kind just referred to is related to her, leads her to apologize for the person who appears to be in the wrong, and to say, "*He did forget,*" or, "*He did not mean to do wrong.*" The same may be said of that spirit of truthfulness which makes all children believe implicitly what is told them, how extravagant soever it may be, but which Laura has preserved long after the age at which others have thrown it aside.

I have already made this report so long, that I must leave unnoticed many subjects which I would gladly touch upon ; and even upon that which will interest so many,—her ideas of God,—I must be brief.

During the past year, she has shown very great inquisitiveness in relation to the origin of things ; she knows that men made houses, furniture, &c., but of her own accord seemed to infer that they did not make themselves or natural objects ; she therefore asks, "*Who made dogs, horses, and sheep?*" She has got from books, and perhaps from other children, the word *God*, but has formed no definite idea on the subject. Not long since, when her teacher was explaining the structure of a house, she was puzzled to know "*how the masons piled up bricks before floor was made to stand on.*" When this was explained, she asked, "*When did masons make Jennette's parlor ; before all Gods made all folks ?*"

I am now occupied in devising various ways of giving her an idea of immaterial power by means of the attraction of magnets, the pushing of vegetation, &c., and intend attempting to convey to her some adequate idea of the great Creator and Ruler of all things.

I am fully aware of the immeasurable importance of the subject, and of my own inadequacy ; I am aware, too, that, pursue what course I may, I shall incur more of human censure than of approbation ; but, incited by the warmest affection for the child, and guided by the best exercise of the humble abilities which God has given me, I shall go on in the attempt to give her a faint idea of the power and love of that Being whose praise she is every day so clearly proclaiming, by her glad enjoyment of the existence which he has given to her.

S. G. HOWE.

"No part of the work of instruction is so important as the first step. No subsequent art of the teacher can efface the discouraging impression produced on the mind of a child who is made to believe, through the fault of his teacher, that he is commencing a task dull and dry, and above his powers of comprehension. From Edgeworth to Pestalozzi, every writer on education, of the slightest reputation, during the last thirty years, has labored to show the necessity of avoiding, in the first elementary lessons, all technical or scientific terms, and of confining that stage of instruction to the simplest ideas, expressed in the simplest words."

"Learning, if rightly applied, makes a young man thinking, attentive, and industrious, confident and wary ; an old man, cheerful and reserved. It is an ornament in prosperity, a refuge in adversity, an entertainment at all times, and meditates when alone."

CLASSIFICATION IN SCHOOLS.

[The classification of scholars in schools is a subject of great importance, and one not sufficiently attended to. We publish, below, some extracts from a paper, prepared by a distinguished teacher of one of the Public Schools in Massachusetts, in compliance with a request from the school committee of the town to which he belongs. It contains valuable hints in regard to the order of exercises; and also some suggestions which teachers will read with interest, in relation to the general management of a school. We premise two or three introductory remarks on the subject of classification.]

No general rule can be laid down as to the number of classes into which a school should be divided. When scholars of all ages and all degrees of attainment are congregated in the same school, there must obviously be more classes than where the schools themselves are classified, and scholars of similar ages and attainments are brought together. The principle seems to be this:—that the school should be reduced to as few classes as possible, without incurring the evil of bringing together those of very unlike capacities and progress. If there are many classes in a school, the time allotted to each must be proportionally reduced. In such case, the teacher is obliged to hurry from class to class, and can devote but little attention to any. He has no opportunity to give oral explanations. His mind is distracted, his time is dissipated. If he succeeds in warming the minds of his pupils, he must forthwith abandon them, and they again become cold.

On the other hand, a classification too comprehensive or generic has its appropriate evils. It necessarily brings together, as mates or class-fellows, those who are widely separated in knowledge and ability. The lesson, in such case, must be adapted to the average or medium capacity of the class. But some members will acquire it, and have much time to spare; others, with the greatest diligence, will not be able to master it. Hence some will grow proud, thinking themselves wonderful geniuses; others will be disheartened, finding no effort sufficient to save them from an obvious inferiority. It is difficult, in such a case, to say which party is most injured. A vast amount of harm is inflicted, by injudicious teachers, in mis-matching scholars.

In this connection we cannot forbear to say a word respecting the folly of those parents who insist that their child or children shall have a place in a class, whether higher or lower than their proper rank, according to the book which they may happen to have;—as though the child's welfare and progress should be sacrificed to a book, instead of adapting the book to his highest welfare and progress. This is as foolish as to shave a boy's form down to a coat, instead of making a coat to fit his form.

Another remark we would make is, that lessons should, as nearly as possible, come round at a specified hour, and after a regular interval. If a class is called up fifteen or twenty minutes earlier than it is accustomed to be called, probably a part of the lesson will not have been studied at all, or the whole may have been very imperfectly studied. The inevitable consequence is a bad recitation; and a teacher can hardly inflict a greater injury upon the intellectual character of a class, than to habituate or familiarize them to bad recitations. If the teacher

finds that the recitation is going on badly, from any cause, it would be better to break it off abruptly than to continue it and thus establish a precedent for succeeding recitations.

Again ; a recitation ought not to be postponed beyond the usual time ; because, if the usual time has arrived, and the pupils think themselves prepared to recite, they will idle away the intervening period ; and, the next day, they may be encouraged to hope for a similar postponement, and, slackening their industry, be unprepared, upon the arrival of the appointed hour. Independently of this consideration, the habit of punctuality and order is of inestimable importance, and it is cultivated by every recurrence of regular and systematic observances. Every time a teacher departs from his own rules, he helps to form a bad habit ; every time he adheres to them, he helps to form a good one. The memory of Joseph Lancaster ought always to be held in respect for his motto, "A place for every thing, and every thing in its place." It is only a new application of this invaluable rule to say, "A time for every thing, and every thing at its time."

We will only add, in conclusion, that it is the first duty of a teacher, on entering a school, to make himself as thoroughly acquainted as possible with the intellectual capacity and condition of his pupils, and then to assort them into as few classes as their diversities will allow. Great care should here be exercised, for, after books are procured, there is always a serious objection to any transfer from one class to another. It is better, however, to err by placing a scholar too low than too high, for it is always easier, for obvious reasons, to advance a scholar to a higher, than to degrade him to a lower, class.—ED.]

I have one recess each half day, averaging in duration fifteen minutes ; that is, in stormy weather we give very short recesses in self-defence, because the boys, unwilling to go out, are rather troublesome within ; in very pleasant weather, we sometimes give more time,—not exactly with a view to *compensation*, but because we suppose the health and enjoyment of the boys will warrant it.

CLASSIFICATION, &C.

I have three *Classes*. The *First* contains 17 scholars ; the *Second*, 14 ; the *Third*, 19. These classes, during the past term, have attended to the following studies :—

1st. Surveying ; Natural Philosophy ; (Reviewing ;) Algebra ; Arithmetic.

2d. Arithmetic ; English Grammar ; Spelling.

3d. Arithmetic ; Geography ; Grammar ; Spelling.

All the scholars have attended to writing, each afternoon. All have attended to reading as time would permit. The time and frequency of recitation will be seen when I describe my "day's work." When not at recitation, they are required to be engaged in study, except during such general exercises as require the suspension of study. I have a systematic arrangement in school ; that is, each class has a known time to recite by the clock, and each class is made to understand what their studies are for each interval between recitations ; and all the

members of the same class are expected to be studying the same books at the same time.

DAY'S WORK.

On entering the room, I usually *survey* the whole premises, seeing that the boys are in their places, taking notice of their persons, their dress, their hair, the general order of their desks, the disposition they have made of their hats, caps, over-coats, &c., the appearance of the floor about the stove, and such other things as may need attention by and by. No remark is usually made during this survey. About 9, (never before, but sometimes two or three minutes after,) I name the chapter to be read, it being understood that no other book nor any other instrument or article is to be upon the desk till after prayers. One or more chapters having been read, each boy reading a verse in turn, the Bibles are closed and laid away. When all is still, the laying down of my own Bible is understood to be the signal for all to rise in their places, it being also understood that all are to stand erect, facing the front, without leaning, or leaving their own place. The prayer occupies from one to three minutes,—after which all take their studies.

After prayers, the *survey* is resumed; some boys are sent to the *pond* for *ablution*. This is now less frequently necessary than formerly. The boys are now, I am happy to say, *very commendably neat*. Some are desired privately, and rather confidentially, to step into the entry to *comb their hair*; and such other things observed and set right, as seem to demand attention. If all this has been completed before 20 minutes past *nine*, a little time is spent in singing. Taking my place in the rear of the school, I say, "Attend!" The time being struck, all join who choose, and sometimes five, (seldom more than seven,) minutes are spent in this way.

"*Studies!*" brings all to their books, and silence is again waited for. The classes are then called in their order, and, unless interrupted, the following is the division of time allowed to each:—

The *First Class* recites from 20 minutes past 9 to 1-4 before 10, in arithmetic, (review.) Arithmetic is the study for one week, and algebra the next. The class, having been *through* both, are thus kept in memory of them, the lesson being learned out of school. At the same sitting, such explanations upon their surveying are given, as may be necessary; and they go at 1-4 before 10 to their seats, and *study* surveying during the remainder of the forenoon.

From 1-4 before 10 to 1-4 past 10. *Second Class*. This class have been studying till now a spelling lesson. They now recite, at the same sitting, the spelling lesson and an arithmetic lesson, which they have learned out of school, and *have not been allowed to touch* since taking their seats. (I am very strict on this point.) The arithmetic at this recitation occupies about twenty-five minutes.

From 1-4 past 10 to 1-4 before 11. *Third Class*. This class have studied spelling since prayers up to the time when the second class had completed their recitation in spelling; that is, about 10 minutes before 10. Their spelling books were then laid aside simultaneously, and their grammars taken. They now recite, at the same sitting, the spelling lesson and their arithmetic, learned, as in the second class, out of school. About twenty-five minutes of this time are spent upon arithmetic, or until recess.

From 1-4 before 11 to 11. *Recess.* The bell-boy is instructed to ring at 11 at any rate. And if the recess is either lengthened or shortened, it is done by their going out a little before their time, or by their being kept a little after.

From 11 to 5 minutes past. Boys coming in, getting still, myself taking survey, &c. &c.

From 5 minutes past 11 to 1-2 past. *Second Class*, in grammar, which they have been required to study since they took their seats, at 1-4 past 10.

From 1-2 past 11 to 5 minutes before 12. *Third Class*, in grammar, which they have been required to study since 10 minutes before 10.

At 5 minutes before 12, slates all cleared, lessons out of school assigned, in arithmetic and algebra, and boys get *ready to go*; books to be carefully laid away, desks all clear; and at 12 they are dismissed.

It often happens that, for idleness, or want of attention, or more frequently for want of preparation in their lessons, sundry boys are detained a half or three quarters of an hour past twelve. Sometimes idlers are appointed to sweep the floor; sometimes late boys are required to *scour* the floor, and do other work under my eye. Sometimes, too, boys who have either carelessly or accidentally soiled the paint about their desks or seats are detained to make them clean.

In the forenoons of those days in which there is a school in the afternoon, the recess is employed by me in writing the copies for the afternoon. As this duty requires a half an hour per day, some time is gained in this way. The recesses of Wednesday and Saturday forenoons are usually spent in recreation, either conversing with the scholars who remain within doors, or with my colleague.

At 2 o'clock, seeing all things in order, as in the morning, about fifteen minutes are employed in finishing the copies in the writing-books. From 2 until called to recite, the several classes *study* the lesson they have for the afternoon. Each class has but *one* recitation in the afternoon, except the exercises of reading and writing. As soon as the copies are finished, the *reading* commences, and is continued till 10 minutes before 3, at which time the *Second Class* is called to recite their lesson in Colburn's First Lessons in Arithmetic. This lesson has been studied partly in the forenoon, after they closed their grammar recitation, at 1-2 past 11, and partly since coming in at 2, abating the time they may have been called off by reading. This recitation is closed about 10 minutes past 3.

From 10 minutes past 3 till 1-4 before 4, the time is spent in *writing* by the whole school, the teacher being among the scholars.

From 1-4 before 4 till 4. *Recess.* During recess I am occupied variously; doing whatever comes up, and sometimes doing,—*nothing*. About five minutes are spent in getting all quiet and occupied. Sometimes three to five more are spent in singing,—this being found to be of a *quieting* nature.

From 5 minutes past 4 to 1-2 past. *Third Class*, in geography. This lesson has been studied during all the time not otherwise occupied during the afternoon. The *Second Class*, after recess, and the *Third*, after the above recitation, are required to be quiet, and are allowed to study either of the lessons for the morrow, in which *they sup-*

pose themselves to be most likely to be deficient. Sometimes they are directed by me *which* study to pursue, this being governed by their past failures.

From 1-2 past 4 till 5 minutes before 5. *First Class*, in natural philosophy. This has been studied during all the time not otherwise employed during the afternoon. They are *not allowed* to study it in the forenoon.

At 5 minutes before 5, we get ready, "*clearing the decks*," and the like. Sometimes a parting word of advice is thrown out, sometimes a *song* precedes the dismissal. We endeavor to go home in good temper. If any punishment is *earned* late in the afternoon, the matter is usually postponed till the morrow, to be taken up in the "*orders of the day*." Sometimes I wait alone to hear the *ticking* of the clock a few minutes, and then go out in spirits corresponding very much with my supposed degree of success during the day, modified, perhaps, in some measure, by the state of my own health.

Thus much for an *ordinary* day's work. This has been my *system* for the last term. As the studies and classes vary, the division of time, of course, must be changed. The *plan* is substantially the same from term to term. The idea is, to place the more *essential* and the more *severe* studies in the morning, partly on account of the greater vigor of both pupils and teacher at that time, and partly in order to give to them *more time*, there being *six* forenoons, and only *four* afternoons, each week.

Sometimes there are interruptions, occasioned by discipline or some other demands upon my time. The time thus demanded is of course taken from the *duration* of recitations. Such inconveniences seldom break in upon the order of the classes, or upon the punctuality of their being called. It is *always understood* that no class shall be *called* BEFORE its time; they may be called later, for reasons already named. It sometimes happens that, on some particularly *knotty point*, I feel justified in giving a class, for a day or two, some extra attention at the expense of the other classes; but this is oftener avoided by taking the class, or the *lame* part of it, after school for half an hour.

I *have*, I think, invariably opened and closed the school at the appointed hours; except having detained portions of the scholars for reasons above detailed.

I *have given* to scholars having clean bills one hour each week, on Monday afternoon, after 4 o'clock.

I have not dismissed scholars without a written request, (though many of them with one,) nor have I excused absences without a written excuse.

I have visited many, but not all, the parents of my pupils, and always with good effect. I have *always* visited, when I supposed the circumstances demanded a personal interview; have always been kindly and politely received.

My punishments are various. Detention, sweeping, scouring, standing, deprivation of recess, and some corporal punishment,—that is, inflicted with the *ferule* upon the hand,—have constituted the *retributive* dispensations of the past term. The *cowhide* has slumbered during the last quarter. I have used the *ferule* but very little, and have governed the school with more ease since the desks have been improved. Early

in the term, some lessons in combing hair, and some in scouring up the emissions of tobacco juice about his premises, have made a lad of large size, and corresponding consequence, a better associate, and have rendered his person and neighborhood much more agreeable to one's "organ of order" and love of decency. I rely mainly on the *willingness* of my pupils to obey my orders, and am happy to add that there is but very little to complain of in the intentions of them all.

Music is taught in my school, and, I think, with good effect. One hour on Monday afternoon, each week, has been devoted to elementary instruction on the *black-board*, and singing from five to ten minutes at intervals during each other day in the week, keeping within *two hours* per week.

I do not spend much time with oral instruction to the *whole* school. I should do more of this, if I had a *lower* school,—*very much* of it in a *primary* school.

Scholars from private schools are *not* superior, perhaps not equal, in qualification, to those from public schools, other things being equal.

The admission of scholars does not usually retard the progress of the school, except when they attempt to join advanced classes, in which case it frequently does retard the class.

The measures to promote neatness I have hinted at before. I do what I can by example, a good deal by precept, and a good deal more, in *hard cases*, by a sort of *practical* influence, which seldom fails of success. I always *make a sloven uncomfortable* till he reforms.

For reasons before stated, I cannot enter into an examination of the *school system* in search of "*defects*." I think it vastly improved within a few years, and I think it still *capable* of improvement.

QUARRELS.—"One of the most easy, most common, and most perfectly foolish things in the world is to quarrel, no matter with whom,—man, woman, or child,—or upon what pretence, provocation, or occasion whatsoever. There is no kind of necessity in it, no manner of use in it, and no species or degree of benefit to be gained by it; and yet, strange as the fact may be, theologians quarrel, and politicians, lawyers, doctors, and princes, quarrel. The church quarrels; nations, and tribes, and corporations, men, women, and children, dogs and cats, birds and beasts, quarrel about all manner of things, and on all manner of occasions. If there is any thing in the world that will make a man feel badly, except pinching his fingers in the crack of a door, it is unquestionably a quarrel. No man ever fails to think less of himself after than he did before one; it degrades him in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others; and, what is worse, blunts his sensibility to disgrace on the one hand, and increases the power of passionate irritability on the other. The truth is, the more quietly and peaceably we all get on, the better; the better for ourselves, the better for our neighbors. In nine cases out of ten, the wisest course is, if a man cheats you, to quit dealing with him; if he be abusive, quit his company; if he slanders you, take care to live so that nobody will believe him. No matter who he is, or how he misuses you,—the wisest way is just to let him alone; for there is nothing better than this cool, calm, quiet way of dealing with the wrongs we meet with."

[For the Common School Journal.]

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

It has been said by them of old time, "There is no new thing under the sun," and he who searches amongst the records of the past, will constantly have occasion to say to himself, "Well, this plan, this notion, this thought, is not so original as its author supposed it was." I have been led into this train of thinking, by observing in the June number of the Old Massachusetts Magazine for 1789, a recommendation, which, if acted upon at that time, would probably have rendered the great effort now making to elevate our Common Schools almost unnecessary. This recommendation is contained in a note to an *Essay upon the Importance of studying the English Language grammatically*. This same Essay was at that time introduced into the American Preceptor, then a popular reading-book, by that beloved schoolmaster, CALEB BINGHAM, whom the writer has heard remark that he inserted it at the request of his friend and fellow-laborer, ELISHA TICKNOR. As these two friends had the interests of education at heart, and were the pioneers of the present school system in Boston, it is not improbable that one of them wrote the piece and the note in the Magazine to which I have alluded. After saying, "Noble distinctions are unknown in America, except constituted by merit; therefore let every freeman remember that nothing will so much insure the independency of his country as a regular, systematic ENGLISH education,"—the writer says:

"Since education has been a question of much debate in this, as well as in many of the other States, and what method is best to be adopted in order to lessen every unnecessary expense, and yet to establish our schools on a more respectable footing, and to diffuse light and knowledge more universally among the people,—I beg leave to suggest the following plan: As each town in this Commonwealth of more than a hundred and forty families is obliged, by an act of the General Court, to support a public Grammar School, in which you will very seldom find more than three or four boys studying the learned languages, and as these scholars are the only persons benefited by the extraordinary expense the town is at in obtaining a master qualified for the office, and as, perhaps, nine tenths of the people of the State do not receive one shilling's advantage per annum, by reason of the great distance they live from the several schools, I think to annihilate all the Latin Grammar Schools, and establish one in each county, will render more essential service to the community, and fix the schools on a more respectable footing than any plan that has yet been suggested. My idea of the matter is simply this:—that there should be a public Grammar School established in each county of the State, in which should be taught English grammar, Latin, Greek, rhetoric, geography, mathematics, &c., *in order to fit young gentlemen for college and school-keeping*. At the head of this county school I would place an able preceptor, who should superintend the whole instruction of the youth committed to his care, and who, together with a board of overseers, should annually examine young gentlemen, designed for schoolmasters, in reading, writing, arithmetic, and English grammar, and, if they are found qualified for the office of school-keeping, and able to teach these branches with ease and propriety, to recommend them for this purpose.

No man ought to be suffered to superintend ever so small a school, except he has been first examined by a body of men of this character, and authorized for this purpose. And I am sure *it is no vanity in me* to think that, were our petty grammar schools annihilated, and one established in each county as a substitute, instead of our common mock schools, kept by a set of ignoramuses, who obtrude themselves upon the people a few months at a time, without the requisite abilities or qualifications, we should have a worthy class of teachers, regularly introduced and examined, and should soon see the happy effects resulting from this noble plan."

The Magazine from which this extract is made, was published in Boston, about fifty-three years ago, and, although most of its contributors have probably been promoted to a higher class, it is a pleasant circumstance that one of the publishers still walks amongst us, honored, and enjoying the wealth whose basis was laid in the useful literary enterprises of his youth.

The expression, "*it is no vanity in me*," would imply that the writer was a teacher of a Grammar School, as we suspected. However this may be, it is evident that he was thoroughly acquainted with the wants of the Common Schools, and had no very faint idea of the cure. He proposed a Normal School in each county; and with such an engine who can doubt, after the little experience we have had, that the character of our teachers would have been greatly elevated, and of course the advantages of our Common Schools increased beyond calculation?

SENEX.

MENAGERIE OF THE SOUL.—What, you will say, have I beasts within me? Yes, you have beasts, and a vast number of them. And, that you may not think I intend to insult you, is anger an inconsiderable beast, when it barks in your heart? What is deceit, when it lies hid in a cunning mind? Is it not a fox? Is not the man who is furiously bent upon calumny, a scorpion? Is not the person who is eagerly set on resentment and revenge, a most venomous viper? What do you say of a covetous man? Is he not a ravenous wolf? And is not the luxurious man, as the prophet expresses it, a neighing horse? Nay, there is no wild beast but is found within us. And do you consider yourself as lord and prince of the wild beasts because you command those that are without, though you never think of subduing or setting bounds to those that are within you? What advantage have you by your reason, which enables you to overcome lions, if, after all, you yourself are overcome by anger? To what purpose do you rule over the birds, and catch them with gins, if you yourself, with the inconstancy of a bird, are hurried hither and thither, and, sometimes flying high, are insnared by pride, sometimes brought down and caught by pleasure? But as it is shameful for him who rules over nations to be a slave at home, and for the man who sits at the helm of state, to be meanly subjected to the beck of a contemptible harlot, or even of an imperious wife,—will it not be, in like manner, disgraceful for you, who exercise dominion over the beasts that are without you, to be subject to a great many, and those of the worst sort, that roar and domineer in your distempered mind?—*Leighton*.

ELEVATING EFFECTS OF SCIENTIFIC PURSUITS.

A mind which has once imbibed a taste for scientific inquiry, and has learned the habit of applying its principles readily to the cases which occur, has within itself an inexhaustible source of pure and exciting contemplations. One would think that Shakspeare had such a mind in view when he describes a contemplative man as finding

“Tongues in trees,—books in the running brooks,—
Sermons in stones,—and good in every thing.”

Accustomed to trace the operation of general causes, and the exemplification of general laws, in circumstances where the uninformed and uninquiring eye perceives neither novelty nor beauty, he walks in the midst of wonders; every object which falls in his way elucidates some principle, affords some instruction, and impresses him with a sense of harmony and order. Nor is it a mere passive pleasure which is thus communicated. A thousand questions are continually arising in his mind, a thousand objects of inquiry presenting themselves, which keep his faculties in constant exercise, and his thoughts perpetually on the wing, so that lassitude is excluded from his life, and that craving after artificial excitement and dissipation of mind which leads to so many frivolous, unworthy, and destructive pursuits, is altogether eradicated from his bosom. It is not one of the least advantages of these pursuits, which, however, they possess in common with every class of intellectual pleasures, that they are altogether independent of external circumstances, and are to be enjoyed in every situation in which a man can be placed in life. The highest degrees of worldly prosperity are so far from being incompatible with them, that they supply additional advantages for their pursuit, and that sort of fresh and renewed relish, which arises partly from the sense of contrast, partly from experience of the peculiar preëminence they possess over the pleasures of sense in their capability of unlimited increase and continual repetition without satiety or distaste. They may be enjoyed, too, in the intervals of the most active business; and the calm and dispassionate interest with which they fill the mind renders them the most delightful retreat from the agitations and dissensions of the world, and from the conflict of passions, prejudices, and interests, in which the man of business finds himself continually involved. There is something in the contemplation of general laws which powerfully persuades us to merge individual feeling, and to commit ourselves, unreservedly, to their disposal; while the observation of the calm, energetic regularity of nature, the immense scale of her operations, and the certainty with which her ends are attained, tend, irresistibly, to tranquillize and reassure the mind, and render it less accessible to repining, selfish, and turbulent emotions. And this it does, not by debasing our nature into weak compliances, and abject submission to circumstances, but by filling us, as from an inward spring, with a sense of nobleness and power which enables us to rise superior to them, by showing us our strength and innate dignity, and by calling upon us for the exercise of those powers and faculties by which we are susceptible of the comprehension of so much greatness, and which form, as it were, a link between ourselves and the best and noblest benefactors of our species, with whom we hold communion in thoughts, and participate in discoveries which have raised them above their fellow-mortals, and brought them near to their Creator.—*Herschel*.

MECHANICS' ASSOCIATIONS.

The increase of these associations is an indication that a spirit of inquiry is abroad, prompting the mechanic to avail himself of the benefits of associated strength in the promotion of the several arts, and in the elevation of those who belong to that numerous class of citizens on whom so much of the comforts of life depends.

These societies are of immense advantage to the young apprentices, who can here find facilities for improving their minds, to which their masters were utter strangers. In former times, if the apprentice was taught the trade of the master to whom he was apprenticed,—taught to write his name, and cipher as far as the Rule of Three,—kept comfortably clad, and had a “freedom suit” when he arrived at the age of twenty-one,—he was considered as having been well treated, and had no cause of complaint. No Lyceums, with their free debates; no Institutes, with their familiar lectures upon the sciences, illustrated with apparatus; no Libraries, with their volumes in all the several departments of science, simplified and prepared with strict reference to the wants of the young,—offered to him their priceless advantages, and beckoned him on from step to step, up the steep of science and of fame.

What had a poor mechanic to do with such things, so far above his sphere? These were not for him, but for the favored few, who, leaving the practical walks of life, immured themselves in their closets, and led a book-worm life, and became theoretically learned and practically ignorant. We well remember a friend of our young days,—a playmate,—who had a mechanical genius, and was endowed with untiring perseverance and industry. He had read and heard of an air-pump, and thought he could make one. He procured the materials, and cast the barrels himself; but not understanding how to fix the valves or the pistons, he travelled forty miles on foot to a college,—the only place where one could be seen,—and humbly begged permission to see it. The professor graciously admitted him into the “*philosophical chamber*,” pointed out the air-pump to him, but would not let him touch it, nor would he take it apart or explain to him how the valves were constructed; and the poor boy walked back to his home with a heavy heart,—thanks to a *stubborn* professor,—just as wise as he came. Then, it was stooping too low for a grave professor in a college to teach a poor mechanic a single element of mechanical philosophy; now, you can find an air-pump in almost every town, and the very boys can take them apart and put them together, and science loses nothing in dignity or usefulness. That boy was cut off by death before manhood had fairly dawned upon him. How would he have rejoiced, had he lived to this day, in the present diffusion of practical science, and how active would he have been in opening the avenues of knowledge, and in battling the ignorance and prejudice which have so long kept the productive classes down to the ranks of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, without a chance for the development of their talents, or the refinement and elevation of their minds!

The young mechanic cannot too highly appreciate the advantages of these associations. He should use every exertion, not only to benefit himself by the means which they extend to him for improvement, but he should also aid them in every way possible, that others may

enjoy the same. We hope that every village will have its Mechanics' Institute, and every mechanic belong to it, and zealously support it.—
Maine Farmer.

MERCURY, OR QUICKSILVER.

[From the Youth's Cabinet.]

I was one day calling the attention of my scholars to the thermometer in the schoolroom, somewhat as follows:—

Teacher. You see the ball at the bottom, about the size of a bullet. It is made of glass, almost as thin as paper, so that the mercury in it feels the heat very quickly. When I put it in my mouth, it becomes warm, and swells so, that it drives that fine white thread of mercury up the tube. There, it has risen from that mark, which is 68 degrees from cipher, or zero, up to 80 degrees. But when I take it out, the heat passes off, and the mercury shrinks in the ball, and that in the tube falls again.

George Heberton listened to what I was saying, and then wished to know if it could ever be any colder than when the mercury sunk to zero.

T. O yes, the weather in New Hampshire and Vermont is sometimes from 10 to 20 degrees below zero, and in the northern parts of Russia the mercury sometimes becomes a solid, and then it is 38 degrees below that same mark. I have seen and handled solid mercury, which had been obtained by an artificial exhaustion of the heat.

G. Where is quicksilver found, and how is it obtained so clear?

T. I will answer that question in the words of a little book, called *Common Things*.

“Mercury is found, in the native state, in globules, or drops, in the cavities of mines; but it is most frequently combined with sulphur, forming the mineral called *cinnabar*, which is of a red color.

“The quicksilver mines of Idria, in Austria, are said to yield annually a hundred tons; those of Spain still more; but those of Peru are the richest.

“The mines of Idria were accidentally discovered, about three hundred years since. That part of the country was then much inhabited by coopers, and one of the men, when retiring from work in the evening, placed a new tub under a dropping spring, to try if it would hold water. When he came in the morning, he found it so heavy that he could scarcely move it. On examination, he found a thin, heavy fluid at the bottom, which proved to be quicksilver. When this circumstance was made known, a society was formed to discover and work the mine whence the mercury had issued. In some parts of the mine, it flows in small streams, so that, in six hours, as much as thirty-six pounds have been collected. In other parts of the mine it is diffused in small globules.”

G. Why is mercury called *quicksilver*?

T. That means “*living silver*.” It is so called because it is lively and flowing, as we speak of living water. It is not hard and dead, like lead.

G. Is it as heavy as lead?

T. Yes. A pint of quicksilver weighs more than thirteen pints of water, while lead is but a little more than eleven times the weight of water. Thus, you see, if we had a pound of quicksilver, bullets and iron bars would float in it.

FIFTEEN MINUTES TO SPARE.

In passing from one engagement to another, during the day, there are often small portions of time for which many make no special provision, and so lose them entirely. A good economist, however, of time, which is money, and to many their only capital, will always have something to fill up these spaces. Put together, they make days, and months, and years, and are worth saving. Some persons are so constituted, that it is next to impossible for them to be systematic, methodical, and steadily and continuously diligent. They can work only by fits and starts; and they work best when the spirit moves them, compensating, by the earnestness and energy with which they labor, for the seasons during which they loaf or lounge. Such gentlemen of genius are, however, rare. A good many lazy fellows who imagine themselves members of this class, have in fact, no right to be ranked with them, and deserve to be talked to, first, for their idleness, and, secondly, for their impudence in trying to excuse their drone-like propensities, by pretending to be like the few eccentric great men, who are, in respect to the way in which they do things, a law unto themselves. Most people, to accomplish any thing, need to be constantly industrious; and for them, it is wiser never to have "fifteen minutes to spare," and always to have some little matter to which they can turn their hand. A certain mathematician, we forget who, is said to have composed an elaborate work, when visiting with his wife, during the interval of time between the moment when she first started to take leave of their friends, and the moment she had fairly finished her last words. We heard once of a young man, eager for knowledge, who read the whole of Hume's History of England, whilst waiting, at his boarding-house, for his meals to be served. No excuse is more common for ignorance, than a want of time to learn; and no excuse is more frequently false. It is not always false. Unconsciously one may get engrossed in business and entangled with engagements, so that he cannot well release himself and escape. But it is bad to do this; and against it one should be on his guard. In many cases, however, such entire occupation of time is not the fact; it is only imagined to be the fact. Every body, every day, wastes moments, if not hours, which might be devoted to useful ends. "Where there is a will, there is always a way," says the proverb. A systematic arrangement of business, habits of rigid punctuality, and a determination to gather up the fragments, will enable a man to make wonderful additions to his stock of knowledge. The small stones which fill up the crevices have almost as much to do with making the fair and firm wall as the great rocks; so the right and wise use of spare moments contributes not a little to the building up, in good proportions and with strength, a man's mind. Because we are merchants and mechanics, we need not be ignorant of all that lies without the boundaries of the counting-room or the shop. Because the good woman looketh well to her household, she needs not to abstain entirely from looking into books. If, to make money, or get a dinner, the mind must be entirely neglected, it were better to be poor and starve. But there is no such necessity as this, as any one may discover, who will, with justifiable avarice, make good use of every "fifteen minutes he has to spare."—*Newburyport Herald*.

WHAT HAS THE YEAR LEFT UNDONE ?

BY HENRY WARE, JUN.

[From the Monthly Miscellany.]

It is not what my hands have done,
That weighs my spirit down,—
That casts a shadow o'er the sun,
And over earth a frown ;—
It is not any heinous guilt,
Or vice by men abhorred ;
For fair the fame that I have built,—
A fair life's just reward ;—
And men would wonder, if they knew
How sad I feel, with sins so few.

Alas ! they only see a part,
When thus they judge the whole ;
They do not look upon the heart,—
They cannot read the soul.
But I survey myself within,
And mournfully I feel
How deep the precipice of sin,
Its root may there conceal,
And spread its poison through the frame,
Without a deed that men would blame.

They judge by actions which they see,
Brought out before the sun ;
But Conscience brings reproach to me
For what I've left undone ;—
For opportunities of good
In folly thrown away,—
For time misused in solitude,—
Forgetfulness to pray,—
And thousand more omitted things,
Whose memory fills my breast with stings.

And therefore is my heart oppressed
With thoughtfulness and gloom ;
Nor can I hope for perfect rest
Till I escape this doom.
Help me, thou Merciful and Just,
This fearful doom to fly ;
Thou art my strength, my peace, my trust,—
O help me, lest I die ;
And let my full obedience prove
The perfect power of faith and love.

How beautiful, how sublime the precept, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"! But who would willingly be thus adjudged? Who is there that does not hope for more mercy at the hand of his Maker, than he has shown to his fellow-man?

EDUCATION AMONG THE INDIANS.

During the pleasant mornings of the summer, the little boys, between the ages of seven and fifteen, are called out, to the number of several hundred, and, being divided into two companies, each of which is headed by some experienced warrior, who leads them on in the character of a teacher, they are led out into the prairie at sunrise, where this curious discipline is regularly taught them. Their bodies are naked, and each one has a little bow in his left hand, and a number of arrows, made of large spears of grass, which are harmless in their effects. Each one has, also, a little belt or girdle around his waist, in which he carries a knife made of a piece of wood, and equally harmless; on the tops of their heads are slightly attached small tufts of grass, which answer as scalps, and in this plight they follow the dictates of their experienced leaders, who lead them through the judicious evolutions of Indian warfare,—of feints,—of retreats,—of attacks, and at last to a general fight. Many manœuvres are gone through, and eventually they are brought up face to face, within fifteen or twenty feet of each other, with their leaders at their head stimulating them on. Their bows are bent upon each other, and their missiles flying, whilst they are dodging and fending them off.

If any one is struck with an arrow on any vital part of his body, he is obliged to fall, and his adversary rushes up to him, places his foot upon him, and, snatching from his belt his wooden knife, grasps hold of his victim's scalp-lock of grass, and, making a feint at it with his wooden knife, twitches it off, and puts it into his belt, and enters again into the ranks and front of battle.

This mode of training generally lasts an hour or more in the morning, and is performed on an empty stomach, affording them a rigid and wholesome exercise, whilst they are instructed in the important science of war. Some five or six miles of ground are run over during their evolutions, giving suppleness to their limbs and strength to their muscles, which last and benefit them through life.

After this exciting exhibition is ended, they all return to their village, where the chiefs and braves pay profound attention to their vaunting, and applaud them for their artifice and valor.

Those who have taken scalps then step forward, brandishing them and making their boast as they enter into the *scalp-dance*, (in which they are also instructed by their leaders or teachers,) jumping and yelling,—brandishing their scalps, and reciting their *sanguinary deeds*, to the great astonishment of their tender-eyed sweethearts, who are gazing with wonder upon them.—*Catlin*.

“Avoid, as much as possible, opposing the will of a stubborn child; but, when obliged to, in the discharge of duty, never suffer the little fellow to come off conqueror. Such an event would prove fatal to him.”
